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ABSTRACT

This document describes Alaska's statewide plan for educational improvement, designed to raise the achievement of all Alaska students and to prepare Alaskans for healthy, productive lives. Challenges to implementation include dramatically varying school populations across the state, the state's enormous size, a high proportion of children living in poverty, and a wealth of languages (85) represented in Alaska's bilingual programs. After a brief history of Alaska's educational reform efforts, the six goals of the plan are delineated, followed by descriptions of the plan development process, the vision and guiding principles, opportunities for public input, subgrant actions, and the structure of the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan. The six plan goals are then described in detail: (1) develop, implement, and assess challenging standards for all students and teachers; (2) share responsibility and be accountable for increased student learning; (3) provide a framework for local school-to-work partnerships for transition from school to work or further training; (4) create technology-rich school environments to help Alaska students and community members become lifelong learners and productive members of the workforce; (5) establish processes in each district and school to involve families and communities to ensure student success; and (6) develop a comprehensive staff-development system. (RT)

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ED 463 590

Alaska Goals 2000
Comprehensive State Improvement Plan

In response to
Guidance of June 5, 1995

GOALS 2000: EDUCATE AMERICA ACT

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Table of Contents

Alaska Goals 2000 Comprehensive State Improvement Plan

Introduction	1
Alaska Educational Reform Efforts	2
Alaska Goals 2000 Educational Goals	4
Plan Development Process	5
The Vision	6
Guiding Principles	6
Opportunities for Public Input	7
Subgrants	8
Structure of Alaska Goals 2000 Plan	8
Teaching and Learning, Standards and Assessments	10
Governance, Accountability, and Management School Improvement	17
School to Work	21
Technology	26
Family and Community Involvement	30
Professional Development	35

Figures

1. Relationship Among Alaska Education Reform Plans 4

2. Goals 2000 Plan Development 5

3. Alaska Goals 2000: Goal Areas and Strategies 9

4. Alaska Assessment Plan 13

5. Epstein Family Involvement Model 31

Alaska Goals 2000

Comprehensive State Improvement Plan

Introduction

Alaska's Goals 2000 Comprehensive State Improvement Plan is the state's ambitious response to the challenge to raise the achievement of all Alaska students and to prepare Alaskans for healthy, productive lives. Alaska recognizes that if the state is to sustain economic health, all students—from those already achieving at high standards to those who are struggling—must learn both the basic and complex skills needed in today's workforce. This is true not only for college bound students, but also for those entering the job market immediately after high school.

Alaska faces this challenge with a diverse people and land.

- School populations vary dramatically across the state. For example, Anchorage has approximately 47,000 students, while Pelican has less than 50 students.

- The geographic size and isolation of many communities are enormous. For example, the North Slope Borough School District is larger than the state of Minnesota. Most communities are accessible only by air or water.

- The statewide average of children living in poverty is 21.8%. Twenty of the state's 54 school districts have higher than average childhood poverty rates, ranging from 22.6% to 87.7%.

- There are over 85 languages represented in Alaska's bilingual programs. Ethnic diversity within the state is growing. Approximately 21% of Alaskan students are Alaska Natives, 5% are Hispanic, 4% are Asian/Pacific Islander and 2% are African American.

The Alaska Goals 2000 State Improvement Plan addresses the challenge and diversity within Alaska by coordinating state and local educational reform efforts to develop an educational system that promotes high quality learning, from birth through adulthood.

Alaska Educational Reform Efforts

Alaska has a long history of education reform. The Alaska Goals 2000 Comprehensive State Improvement Plan builds upon previous efforts and is closely coordinated with current, state systemic reforms. These education reform efforts include:

Alaska 2000 (AK2K). Recent education reform efforts began in 1991 with the Alaska 2000 Education Initiative (AK2K). The 22-member Alaska 2000 Panel developed 38 recommendations in 10 areas to restructure Alaska education. Hundreds of Alaskans became involved in education reform. The highlight of AK2K was the development and subsequent adoption of content standards in 10 areas (in three phases) by Fall, 1995.

Alaska Goals 2000. The Alaska Goals 2000 Comprehensive State Improvement Plan continues the standards-based education reform started with AK2K by reconfiguring the recommendations from AK2K into six goals. The Alaska Goals 2000 State Panel includes all 22 members of the AK2K Panel, thus providing continuity to state education reform. The Governor and Commissioner of Education appointed another 22 Alaskans to the panel to ensure the broad-based representation required by the Goals 2000 Educate America Act. Appendix A lists the members of the State Panel.

The Governor's Education Initiative. In 1995, Governor Knowles continued efforts to improve the quality of education and to ensure adequate and equitable funding for Alaska's schools with a three-part Governor's Education Initiative to:

- create an education endowment to provide long-term stable funding for K-12 public education;
- improve the performance of Alaska's schools and the skills of Alaska's children; and,
- design a new funding program to distribute school funds on a simple, more equitable basis.

One component of the Governor's Education Initiative, the Quality Schools Initiative, has four parts that are linked directly to Alaska's Goals 2000 Plan. Each is discussed more thoroughly later in appropriate sections of the plan.

- Quality Academic Standards—set high expectations for students and assess whether students are achieving those standards.
- Quality Professional Standards—make sure teachers and administrators have and maintain the skills and abilities necessary to do their jobs well.
- Quality Schools Standards—measure schools against research-proven indicators through a formal accreditation process.
- Quality Family and Parent Involvement—provide support for parent and family involvement in learning activities at home and in school.

Children's Cabinet. The Governor's Education Initiative is one of five strands of an even larger systemic reform initiative, the Children's Cabinet, established in 1995 by Governor Knowles to guide and monitor the progress of five strategic reform initiatives: Children's Trust, Community-based Prevention 0-8, Status of Children, Youth and Justice, and Education. See Appendix B for a more compete description of these components.

The Cabinet's mission states that it will, "In partnership with families, ensure that all Alaska children have opportunities for happy, healthy and productive lives." The Cabinet is comprised of the Commissioners of Education, Community and Regional Affairs, Health and Social Services, Public Safety and Corrections, and the state Attorney General. The Children's Cabinet will oversee the development of benchmarks and goals related to the condition of children in Alaska and will produce a Children's Report Card summarizing their findings. In addition, the Cabinet will sponsor a Governor's Summit on Education in September, 1996 a "Caring Communities" Summit and a Children's Summit the following year.

The state of Alaska has been selected as one of three 1996 Danforth Policymakers Institute states, and will use this opportunity to develop a plan for linking services to children and families in Alaska's communities.

Figure 1 portrays how Alaska's educational reform efforts are linked, and how together they promote continuity, best practices, and effective use of funds across the state.

- The Children's Cabinet is the foundation on which the state and local communities, working together, will improve the lives of Alaska families and children.
- The Governor's Education Initiative (one strand of the Children's Cabinet) builds upon the Cabinet to improve the quality of education and to ensure adequate and equitable funding for Alaska's schools.
- Alaska's Goals 2000 six goal areas parallel the four parts of the Quality School Initiative but are also related to stable and equitable school funding.
- The Consolidated Plan for Federal Programs contains the same six goals from the Goals 2000 plan, but focuses primarily on students served within federal programs. Other federally funded programs, such as the School to Work Implementation Grant, are integrated into the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan.

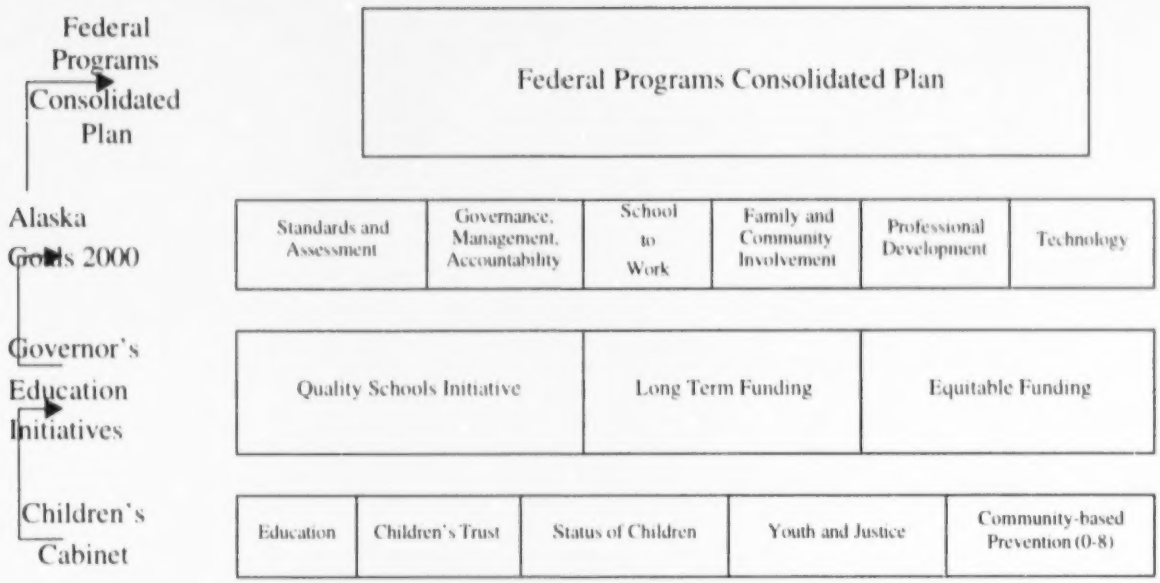

Figure 1. Relationship Among Alaska Education Reform Plans

Alaska Goals 2000 Educational Goals

The Alaska Goals 2000 Plan streamlines previous reform efforts into six goals.

1. Develop challenging standards for all students and teachers, strategies to implement these standards, and a comprehensive assessment system to ensure students meet these high standards.

2. Share responsibility and be accountable for increased student learning through the development and implementation of state, district, and site-based improvement plans.

3. Provide a framework to local school to work partnerships to develop performance-based student-centered plans for transition from school to work or further training (which encourages life-long learning).

4. Create technology-rich school environments to help Alaska students and community members become lifelong learners, productive members of the workforce, and contributing citizens.

5. Establish processes in each district and school to involve families and communities to ensure student success.

6. Develop a comprehensive staff development that builds the capacity of all school staff, families, and communities to improve instruction and enhance student learning.

Plan Development Process

The Alaska Goals 2000 State Panel oversaw the development of the Comprehensive State Improvement Plan. A primary responsibility of the State Panel was to reconfigure the recommendations from AK2K into the required elements of a Goals 2000 plan. The Panel established six goals and identified strategies for each. The Panel ensured integration of the plan into current activities by participating in various state-level committees, including the Technology Task Force, School to Work Implementation Task Force, the Standards and Assessment Oversight Committee, and other committees. Finally, the State Panel will play an active role in monitoring and implementing the plan.

Figure 2 presents a timeline and summary of the Goals 2000 Plan development process and how it builds upon the standards-based education reform started with AK2K.

Figure 2. Goals 2000 Plan Development

Date	Activity
1991	The Alaska 2000 Panel (22 members) develop the original recommendations for the AK2K plan.
1992	Approximately 100 educators, citizens, and other community members review and revise the original recommendations.
1992-93	The revised AK2K plan goes to public hearing and is further revised.
1993	The Department of Education reviews the recommendations.
1994	The Governor and Commissioner of Education appoint Alaska Goals 2000 State Panel. The Panel reconfigures the recommendations from AK2K to the six goals of the Alaska Goals 2000 plan.
1995	The State Board of Education approves final content standards in 10 areas developed under AK2K.
1995	The Department of Education further refines the plan.
1995	The Goals 2000 Panel receives additional public comment and conducts another round of review by citizens and educators.
July, 1996	The Department of Education prepares final version of the Goals 2000 Comprehensive State Improvement Plan for State Panel review and approval.

The Vision

The Alaska Goals 2000 Panel demonstrated its commitment to integrate AK2K efforts with the Goals 2000 plan development process by adopting the same vision to guide the plan's development.

> **Alaska Goals 2000 Guiding Vision**
>
> Alaskans envision a public school system controlled by the public that will graduate world class students who will communicate effectively, think logically and critically, discover and nurture their own creative talents, possess essential vocational and technological skills, be responsible citizens, be committed to their own health and fitness, and accept personal responsibility for sustaining themselves economically.

Guiding Principles

Four principles contributed to guiding the development of the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan.

High standards are critical for high student achievement. At the heart of the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan are rigorous standards for all students. Alaska has made significant progress in developing and adopting high standards in 10 content areas.

Local control and public input must drive educational reform efforts. This plan is the culmination of over five years of extensive dialogue, development, and review by literally hundreds of Alaskan educators, parents, business leaders, and other community members. The Alaska Goals 2000 Plan is based on the premise that school districts, with support from the state, must chart their own path towards excellence.

Alaska educational reform efforts provide the foundation for the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan. The Alaska Goals 2000 Plan builds upon Alaska's pioneering AK2K effort. The current Quality Schools Initiative continues the state's leadership in reform and ensures that the State Board of Education, Department of Education, and school district leaders integrate their efforts to improve public education throughout the state.

Technology and staff development play critical roles in implementing all content area standards. This plan presents technology and staff development as separate goals but also weaves their strategies throughout the plan. The use of technology is central to Alaska education reform and provides avenues for information, resources, and connections to Alaska from around the world. Likewise, training teachers and other educators to build and strengthen their skills is an essential part of successfully implementing a standards-based education system.

Opportunities for Public Input

Over the past five years, the State Board of Education and State Department of Education have conducted the broadest public involvement and outreach in the history of the state's education system in shaping AK2K, and then the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan. The major efforts made to secure public input are summarized below.

- .Extensive committee work was at the center of the AK2K effort. A set of 29 committees brought together educators, business people, parents, local school board members, and native Alaskan representatives to discuss school reform.

- Between 1992 and 1995, the Department of Education published four eight-page newspaper inserts seeking public input on educational reform strategies and proposed content standards. Concurrently, the State Board of Education conducted face-to-face and teleconference public hearings in communities across the state about the standards.

- The Department of Education held an educational summit in January, 1993 in Anchorage. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander and key officials of the National Business Roundtable addressed the public about school reform. Most importantly, the public provided input on AK2K reform recommendations. The Department also held a similar mini-summit in Fairbanks, and conducted teleconferenced hearings in 38 additional communities.

- The Alaska Department of Education sponsored a Alaska Goals 2000 kick-off meeting for school districts in October, 1994. The Department invited districts to send six-member teams: thirty-three of Alaska's 53 school districts participated.

- On November 6, 1995, the State Department of Education convened a meeting to review six working papers (one for each goal) developed specifically for input to the Alaska Goals 2000 and Federal Programs Consolidated Plan. Over 88 persons participated including Alaska Goals 2000 Panel members, parents, educators, and representatives of community advisory groups. The Department collected over 790 written comments to help in revising a final version of the plan.

The development of Alaska's Goals 2000 plan was synchronized with the preparation of the Federal Programs Consolidated Plan. Therefore, many groups representing federal programs also reviewed and helped shape this plan, including the Title I Committee of Practitioners, Migrant Education Committee of Practitioners, Migrant Education Parent Advisory Council, Homeless Statewide Committee, and the School-to-Work Transition Team.

Subgrants

The Alaska Department of Education established procedures to award subgrants for planning and implementation of local education reform, preservice teacher education, and professional development activities.

In the first year, the Department issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in August, 1994 for two subgrant categories. The Department held two audioconferences to assist districts with planning and proposal writing. The Commissioner of Education appointed a five member peer review panel, broadly representative of the public. Members from the Department of Education's Quality of Workforce Committee participated in the review process to ensure expertise was available to provide guidance about teacher preservice education and professional development. In October, 1994, the Department awarded 45 subgrants: 32 grants in local education reform and 13 grants for professional development and teacher preservice education.

In March, 1995, Alaska issued a single RFP for the second year of subgrants for local education reform, professional development, and teacher preservice education to encourage collaboration among LEAs and with Institutions of Higher Education. To be eligible, districts were required to have a state-approved Goals 2000 Local Improvement Plan. The Department held three audioconferences to assist districts with planning and proposal writing and established a process to review applications and award subgrants. The Department awarded 26 subgrants in August, 1995.

Structure of Alaska Goals 2000 Plan

The six sections of the Alaska Goals 2000 Plan are drawn from the required elements of Section 306 of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Discussion of each section addresses the following topics:

Goal: What will be accomplished.

Rationale: Why the goal is important in Alaska.

Current State Activities: Existing state activities related to the goal.

What We Plan to Do: The strategies to achieve the goal and a brief description of how the strategies will be accomplished.

Figure 3 displays an overview of the plan's six goals areas and the strategies to implement them. Appendix C outlines the benchmarks and timelines for the progress on the Quality Initiatives.

Alaska Goals 2000

Teaching & Learning, Standards & Assessment
Implement challenging standards
Complete curriculum frameworks
Align local curricula
Integrate academic & occupational curricula
Develop dropout prevention strategies
Implement state assessment system
Examine culturally and appropriate assessments
Support local assessments
Implement teacher standards
Develop standards for other educators
Revise teacher education programs
Revise teacher certification system
Governance, Accountability, & Management
Promote site-based management
Revise state report card
Support local accreditation
Identify & reward excellence
Develop school improvement procedures
Support waiver requests
Recruit & retain teachers
School to Work
Promote & support state-level collaborations
Increase awareness
Support statewide development & implementation
Build capacity of local partnerships
Provide equal access to career development information & support services
Goal Areas and Strategies
Technology
Provide access to hardware & services
Offer professional development
Support standards implementation
Establish funding sources
Build collaboration
Develop administrative & support uses of technology
Family & Community Involvement
Implement effective family involvement model
Promote centers for support services
Design self-review standards
Strengthen local linkages
Include parents& community members in making decisions
Share information about best practices
Facilitate use of culturally appropriate practices
Professional Development
Support training cadres
Collaborate on pre-service & inservice opportunities
Integrate professional development funds
Disseminate information about effective practices
Assure compliance
Provide staff development

Figure 3. Alaska Goals 2000: Goal areas and strategies

Teaching and Learning, Standards and Assessments

GOAL 1

Develop challenging standards for all students and teachers, strategies to implement the standards, and a comprehensive assessment system to ensure students meet the high standards.

RATIONALE

Teaching and learning is the foundation of systemic education reform and involves the development and implementation of challenging content and performance standards that clearly identify what we expect children to know and be able to do. The process of developing standards depends on our beliefs about knowledge, teaching, and learning. Recent research on learning, which guided the development of Alaska's student standards, states that knowledge is constructed from within and that learning is enhanced when children are actively engaged in the learning process. Teaching and learning, thus, should focus on thinking, problem solving, and communication abilities as well as the basic skills. The shift in thinking about how children learn requires a corresponding shift in the way we assess children. Assessments that are closely linked to "real life" situations and problem solving strategies are an important part of student assessment.

Challenging frameworks and new assessments alone will not greatly improve Alaska schools unless teachers know and can teach the new curriculum. Systemic education reform also requires corresponding changes in teacher education. Together, challenging student standards, new assessments, and aligned teacher standards form an interlocking triad of reform.

CURRENT STATE ACTIVITIES

Content Standards. As part of AK2K, Alaska has already taken major step towards statewide, high expectations of students and schools by developing challenging standards in 10 content areas: English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, world languages, history, geography, government/citizenship, healthy lifestyles, and the arts. Begun in 1991, broad based committees of educators, community members, and content area specialists developed each set of content standards which was then reviewed by hundreds of Alaskan educators, parents, advocacy groups, and community members. The State Board adopted the standards in 1995.

Curriculum Frameworks. Alaska has already secured four federal grants to support the development of curriculum frameworks in English/language arts, social studies, healthy lifestyles, and math/science. The development of curriculum frameworks has two primary goals:

- To provide equal opportunities for all Alaska students to meet high standards; and,

- To align local curricula, instructional materials, assessments, and professional development with challenging standards.

Broad based committees of educators and community members oversaw the development of the curriculum frameworks. The curriculum frameworks and accompanying resource kits include recommendations for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development. The committees are also designing two distance delivery courses: one for district curriculum development committees and a second for teachers.

Comprehensive Assessment System. Alaska law and regulation require a statewide assessment for students in grades 4, 8, and 11 in reading, language arts, and mathematics. During 1995-96, Alaska used, for the first time, the California Achievement test, fifth edition (CAT/5), with a student questionnaire, and a voluntary direct writing assessment. A new statewide assessment system, however, is in development. The design of this system by fall of 1996 will allow baseline data collection in 1996-97 which will lead to the development of performance indicators for the Quality Initiatives.

The Department of Education created a work plan to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system with multiple indicators that aligns standards, curriculum, and assessment practices. This system will assess student progress in attaining challenging state standards and a school system's effectiveness in assisting students in meeting the standards.

In August, 1996 the state will convene a design conference to complete the current draft of a multi-year state assessment design in conjunction with Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST); the Alaska Regional Comprehensive Assistance Center; and the National Bilingual Center at George Mason University, expert consultants in the area of assessment for limited English proficient students. The Department plans to present the completed design to the State Board of Education in September, 1996. At a minimum, the design is expected to include a standardized norm-referenced achievement test, performance testing in writing and mathematics, a student questionnaire, and a phase-in of appropriate instruments for special populations over the next four years.

Teacher Education Standards. The State Board adopted teacher education standards in July, 1995. The five teacher education programs are actively communicating the new standards to prospective teachers. Recent legislation requires all school district evaluation systems to be based on the state teacher standards.

Teacher Education Programs. Representatives from the five Alaska institutions of higher education (IHE) with teacher education programs have been directly involved in Alaska teacher education reform through their participation in the Teacher Education Standards Committee, and the Professional Certification Task Force.

In addition to the Deans of Education from the state's institutions, the Professional Certification Task Force includes representatives from business, professional organizations, the State Board of

Education, and professional organizations. It is working on the relationship of licensure to the state teacher standards, as well as examining how to improve the overall quality of the state's professional educational workforce.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Implement challenging standards. *Develop and implement challenging content and performance standards, including school to work and opportunity-to-learn standards, with the involvement of educators, parents, community, and business representatives.*

Alaska has already developed content standards in 10 areas. The next step is to develop performance standards. An expert contractor is currently developing a comparison matrix which matches Alaska's standards to those of other states. From this work will come benchmarks and performance standards at three levels. Constituent groups from the professional community in the state will review this work and will make recommendations to the Commissioner by September, 1996.

As part of a continuing relationship with Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the Department will establish a statewide assessment plan which includes support for the development or determination of instruments and procedures appropriate to all of the Quality School Initiatives, including the development of performance and opportunity-to-learn standards. The broad outline of this work is displayed in Figure 4.

The Department will also develop school to work standards, and establish appropriate benchmarks and performance standards. A key element of the plan is to outline how to infuse the school to work standards into student content standards and tie them to teacher certification.

Complete curriculum frameworks. *Complete curriculum frameworks in each subject area, with ways to integrate content areas, to guide teacher implementation of the content standards.*

Under Alaska Goals 2000, Alaska will continue the development of curriculum frameworks and resource kits to guide teacher implementation of content standards. Alaska will follow a similar process (used to develop existing curriculum frameworks) by establishing broad based committees of educators and community members to oversee the development of curriculum frameworks in the six remaining content areas. The frameworks are in both written and electronic (CD-ROM) form, and the Department has been working with the University of Alaska Anchorage over the past year to establish a web site for the frameworks, in order that they are broadly accessible to teachers.

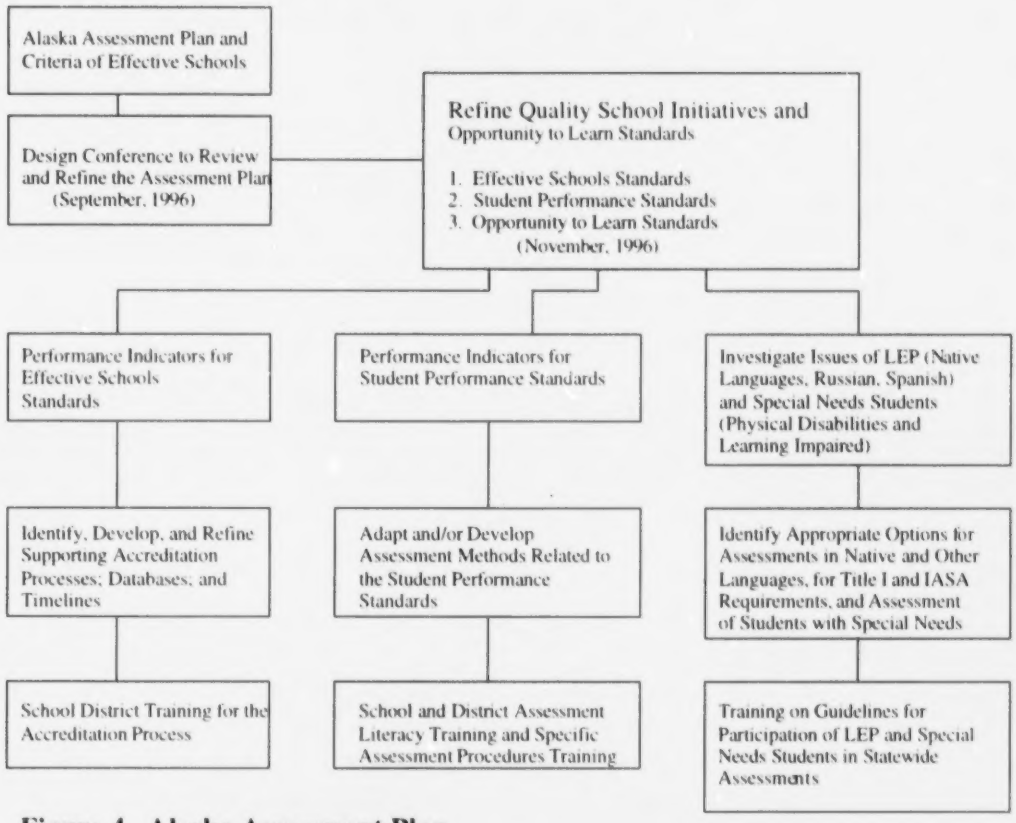
Alaska Assessment Plan and Criteria of Effective Schools
Design Conference to Review and Refine the Assessment Plan (September, 1996)
Refine Quality School Initiatives and Opportunity to Learn Standards
1. Effective Schools Standards
2. Student Performance Standards
3. Opportunity to Learn Standards
(November, 1996)
Performance Indicators for Effective Schools Standards
Performance Indicators for Student Performance Standards
Investigate Issues of LEP (Native Languages, Russian, Spanish) and Special Needs Students (Physical Disabilities and Learning Impaired)
Identify, Develop, and Refine Supporting Accreditation Processes; Databases; and Timelines
Adapt and/or Develop Assessment Methods Related to the Student Performance Standards
Identify Appropriate Options for Assessments in Native and Other Languages, for Title I and IASA Requirements, and Assessment of Students with Special Needs
School District Training for the Accreditation Process
School and District Assessment Literacy Training and Specific Assessment Procedures Training
Training on Guidelines for Participation of LEP and Special Needs Students in Statewide Assessments

Figure 4. Alaska Assessment Plan

Align local curricula. *Assist districts in aligning local curricula with the curriculum frameworks.*

The Department has already developed and provided a distance-learning course (from the curriculum frameworks grants) specifically for district curriculum development committees to help them align their district curriculum to four of the state content standards. The Department also plans to develop a series of video tapes (based on the distance learning course) which they will distribute to all districts Under Alaska Goals 2000, the Department will develop similar materials for the curriculum frameworks yet to be developed to help districts align their curriculum to state content standards.

Integrate academic and occupational curricula. *Develop, revise, and implement integrated academic and occupational curricula.*

Investing in staff development and working with business partners and vocational education advisory councils are crucial elements to ensure academic and vocational teachers jointly implement curricula that integrates work place skills into academic course content. The Department will foster the development and implementation of integrated curricula at the local level with the following actions:

- Encourage local partnerships to examine exemplary models of integrated curricula and identify key components to be implemented locally.

- Disseminate and prioritize the national occupational skill standards for inclusion into occupational curricula.

- Collaborate with tech prep consortia to enhance integrated academic and occupational curricula.

- Collaborate with business/school partners to provide training and planning sessions for integrating academic and occupational curricula.

- Promote the use of Alaska Career Information System for students, counselors, teachers, and parents to obtain current, accurate information about occupational preparation needs.

- Align the development of local curriculum efforts with existing federal legislation such as Carl Perkins and School-to-Work.

- Provide teachers, counselors, and administrators with work-based learning opportunities and internships.

- Encourage curriculum planning opportunities for academic and vocational teachers to work together to develop, revise, and implement integrated curricula.

Develop dropout prevention strategies. *Foster the development and implementation of local plans for dropout prevention, dropout intervention, and programs to recapture those students who have already dropped out.*

The Department will build a comprehensive dropout prevention plan to ensure that students stay in school to achieve state standards. These steps include:

- Collaborate with local communities and other organizations and agencies to provide comprehensive services for families that lay the foundation for dropout prevention (e.g., train teenage parents so they help their children stay in school).

- Identify and disseminate model intervention programs that address the special needs of at-risk students.

- Identify and help schools implement research-based programs to ensure at-risk students and dropouts have the opportunities to acquire basic skills to achieve work-related success and become economically self-sufficient (e.g., identify and reduce the current barriers that make re-entry difficult for many students).

- Collaborate with the Governor's Task Force on Youth and Justice so that dropout prevention strategies are consistent and reinforce each other.

Implement state assessment system. *Design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive state assessment plan (with community input) aligned with state content and performance standards.*

The Department will follow the work plan created to develop and implement the comprehensive assessment system which focuses on the development or determination of assessment practices and instruments which are aligned to state standards and which are appropriate for the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the state. The Department will obtain expert technical assistance from agencies described above. See Figure 4.

As part of the development of this system, the Department will continue to obtain feedback from a state assessment advisory committee. In addition, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory will make it possible for teachers and districts in the state to contribute to a clearinghouse of local assessments developed primarily by Alaska educators and indexed to state standards.

Examine culturally and appropriate assessments. *Consider assessment instruments that are culturally and language appropriate when developing the comprehensive assessment system.*

The Department, in conjunction with a state assessment advisory committee, will explore the use of assessment instruments that are culturally and language appropriate when developing the comprehensive state assessment system.

Implement teacher standards. *Support Alaska's educators through the development and implementation of professional teacher standards and professional development programs.*

Alaska developed and put into regulation new teacher education standards in July, 1995. The next step is to determine how to measure whether teachers meet the new standards. As a starting point, the Professional Certification Task Force is investigating how other states measure applicant competence. The Task Force will then develop new licensure requirements. Three levels of licensure are being considered. The Task Force will recommend to the State Board of Education that the highest level of teacher licensure will reflect the standards of the National Professional Board of Teaching or their equivalent.

Frameworks task forces in each content area have recommended to the Professional Certification Task Force how teachers can better be prepared to assist students to meet standards. The Department will also ensure that all professional development activities are based upon and support the implementation of the new student and teacher standards.

Develop standards for other educators. *Develop and implement standards for other education professionals.*

A subcommittee of the Professional Certification Task Force is currently developing standards for principal certification/licensure. The Task Force expects to complete the principal standards by the end of 1996-97. Afterwards, the Task Force will consider the development of standards for other professional educators.

Revise teacher education programs. *Revise Alaska's teacher education programs so they are consistent with Teacher Education Standards.*

Alaska's five Institutions of Higher Education have participated and will continue to participate in Department work on teacher standards and student content standards. The State Board of Education and Department of Education will work with the five IHE to revise teacher education programs so they are consistent with new teacher standards. The IHE will also develop measures and procedures to determine whether teachers achieve competency in the standards.

Revise teacher certification system. *Revise the state teacher certification system so it is consistent with Teacher Education Standards.*

Current certification/licensure regulations require the completion of an approved Teacher Education Program. After a method to measure competency on teacher standards has been developed, the Teacher Certification Office will revise the regulations so they are consistent with new teacher standards. Thus far, the Teacher Certification Office has completed Phase I, upgrading the technology used when reviewing teacher applications for certification. The next step is to fully implement the technology.

Governance, Accountability, and Management
School Improvement

GOAL 2

Share responsibility and be accountable for increased student learning through the development and implementation of state, district, and school-based improvement plans.

RATIONALE

A clear lesson emerging from school improvement efforts is the importance of local or school-based decision making. In a restructured education system, the school site is the unit of development and decision making. Each school must develop a set of articulated goals to meet the needs of the students and community. Teachers and principals must work with families and community members to make collective decisions.

Alaska's tradition of strong local control is an asset for school-based decision making. Community teams of educators, families, and community members need, however, support and technical assistance to implement school-based decision making. Furthermore, to make informed decisions, the teams need information that is readily available and presented in ways that illustrate trends and findings over time. Research about effective practices can help the teams understand key issues in their community.

CURRENT STATE ACTIVITIES

The governor has launched several initiatives to improve school governance, accountability, and management. These initiatives and other state efforts include:

Governor's Status Report on Children. The Children's Cabinet oversees the development of the Governor's Status Report on Children. This report expands the Department of Education's "school report card" to the public on the status of Alaska's students and schools. The Status Report draws attention to children's well-being by establishing benchmarks and tracking indicators of the state's progress toward them.

Quality Schools Standards. One of the four parts of the Governor's Quality Schools Initiative is Quality School Standards which will measure schools against research-proven indicators for school accreditation. The first phase of developing the school accreditation system has produced draft criteria and performance indicators for schools. In its final form, which is expected to be approved during the 1996-97 school year, the Quality School Standards will be used to select Distinguished Schools under Title I of the Improving America's School Act.

State Report Card. The Alaska Report Card is under review as part of the development of Quality School Standards. The Report Card collects information on enrollment, transience rates, attendance, dropout rates, graduation rates, promotion, and standardized test results. The revised Report Card will be integrated into school accreditation and contribute to the development of a uniform, statewide performance indicator system.

Funding Reform. Funding Reform, one part of the Governor's Quality Schools Initiative, will change the complex funding formula used to distribute funds to the state's 54 school districts. Through the State Board of Education, the Funding Reform Initiative is developing a foundation program to change the current formula so funding is fair, equitable, and accountable; be affordable both now and in the future; channel resources to communities with the greatest need; and be easier to understand and administer.

Children's Summit. The Children's Summit will further encourage local system reform. The Children's Summit is an event and a means to promote community development, school-based decision making, and local accountability for children's well-being. The Children's Summit will provide a forum for the presentation of the Children's Report Card, the Governor's State of the Child address, and sharing information about other administration efforts to promote the well-being of children. The summit also supports community ownership and local action by providing technical assistance to local teams.

Charter Schools. The Charter Schools Act of 1995 creates a 10-year pilot project that allows for up to 30 charter schools to operate at any one time in Alaska. Charter schools are exempt from the local school district's textbook, program, curriculum, and scheduling requirements, as well as state law governing staffing. An academic policy committee consisting of parents of students attending the school, teachers and school employees, operate the school with ultimate authority resting in the local school board.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Promote school-based decision making. *Promote awareness of and help schools implement school-based decision making.*

Although current regulations already require the participation of parents, community members, and students in annually evaluating school performance, the Department will further promote the involvement of parents and students in governance through the Partnership 2000 model of family and community involvement. As a Partnership 2000 state beginning in 1996-97, the Department will provide training and subsidize some aspects of district and school membership, e.g., through provision of materials for parent and community involvement, sponsoring a parent involvement summit jointly with the PTA.

Revise state report card. *Revise the Alaska Report Card to include information about performance on state content and performance standards and other meaningful data to guide school improvement.*

The Department of Education established a Task Force to revise the Alaska Report Card. Beginning with 1996-97, the Report Card will be aligned with the new state accreditation process, and will report information on school and district progress on student content standards, state priority areas, and other areas such as the number of teachers at each level of licensure. The Department will also review other district reporting requirements to avoid duplication and ensure alignment with the Report Card and encourage review and comment by employers and community members to improve the usefulness of the Report Card to a more diverse audience.

Support local accreditation. *Develop and provide support to local schools and districts through accreditation.*

The Department is developing a school accreditation system. Already, the Department has identified criteria for high-performing schools and will ask for public and educator input over the next six months. By December, 1996 the Department will have developed regulatory language for accreditation for public review. The Department anticipates that one alternative in the new accreditation system will include the use of the Student Improvement process of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, with the state's indicators. The Department will report school accreditation levels in the Alaska Report Card by 1998, as described above.

Identify and reward excellence. *Develop criteria to identify (and reward) excellence in schools and to identify schools not meeting state standards using information on the revised Alaska Report Card.*

After the Alaska Report Card is revised (as outlined above), the Department will develop criteria to identify schools that meet high performance levels and identify those schools that do not as part of the statewide accreditation system. The criteria will be developed in conjunction with Title I personnel from the Improving America's School Act. The Department will explore ways to award all schools that meet high performance levels, consistent with any procedures used to recognize Title I schools that reach high standards.

Develop school improvement procedures. *Develop procedures to improve schools not meeting state content and performance standards.*

The Department will develop procedures to improve schools not meeting state standards. The procedures will include targeting professional development and technical assistance to identified schools. For example, the Department may make the talent banks or training cadres (being established from existing pools of trained teacher leaders or community and business expertise) available to schools not meeting state standards. These procedures will be consistent with the procedures used to improve Title I schools not making adequate progress towards meeting challenging state standards.

In addition, because state standards are voluntary, the Department will also develop a system to compare district standards to state standards, monitor district performance on district standards, and make available technical assistance to schools not meeting district standards.

Support waiver requests. *Provide information and assistance to districts seeking waivers to improve the opportunities for all students to meet state standards.*

Districts can apply for a federal waiver through the USDOE waiver process, or a state waiver of any state regulation except those in the health/safety area by presenting a plan linked to increased student achievement to the State Board. The Department will continue to assist any district which requests help with either waiver and will provide guidance to districts for use of waivers.

Recruit and retain teachers. *Develop strategies to recruit and retain highly qualified educators, including minorities.*

The Professional Certification Task Force is exploring ways to improve the quality of Alaska's Educator Work Force, including:

- Developing a tiered licensure based upon the new teacher standards;
- Helping local students, Native Alaskans, and paraprofessionals pursue teaching careers or create career ladders and other opportunities for Native teachers and paraprofessionals to improve their teaching skills;
- Supporting a Professional Development system which helps paraprofessionals and teachers attain certification and meet high standards of professional skill and knowledge; and
- Developing standards for administrators (principals and superintendents) and other education professionals.

In addition, with the passage of HB465, which requires a standards-based evaluation system in each district, the Department is forming a partnership with Western Michigan University's CREATE (Center for Research in Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation) to provide training for every district during 1996-97 to develop a professional evaluation system which includes, for example, the requirement for parent and student input into teacher evaluation and be based on teacher education standards.

School to Work

GOAL 3

Provide a framework to local school to work partnerships to develop performance-based, student-centered plans for transition from school to work or further training (which encourages life-long learning).

RATIONALE

All students should be prepared to transition from school to work upon graduation. To make these transition successful, students need to meet high academic standards and they need career exploration and work experience. Business and industry know the skills necessary for employment and local school to work partnerships can provide the real application for classroom learning for students. The school to work system will be an integral part of Alaska's human resource development system which connects the state's workforce development, economic development, and education efforts.

CURRENT STATE ACTIVITIES

The Alaska Goals 2000 School to Work Plan is part of a statewide comprehensive effort to ensure that all Alaska's youth will have the skills and knowledge they need to make a successful transition from school to work and life-long learning. It supports and is based on current state school to work plans.

School to Work Planning and Implementation Grants. In 1994, the United States Congress passed the School to Work Opportunities Act to provide critical linkages among states' economic development, workforce development, and education systems. At the same time, Alaska established the Alaska Human Resources Investment Council (AHRIC) as an umbrella organization, administered directly from the Governor's Office, to coordinate workforce development and school to work efforts among many state agencies and local, state, and federal programs. AHRIC promotes a statewide system that supports local school to work efforts in all Alaskan communities.

Alaska received a statewide School to Work Planning and Development Grant in 1994 from funds authorized under the School to Work Opportunities Act. The School to Work Council, a 30 member council of critical stakeholders in a school work system, oversaw this effort. This group developed Alaska's vision and plan for a statewide school to work system. As a result of the success of this planning grant, Alaska received a federally funded Implementation Grant in 1995. The state's implementation grant is a collaborative venture to serve all Alaskan communities and has the following components:

- Integrating school-based and work-based learning
- Promoting professional development
- Connecting activities
- Funding local partnerships
- Implementing systemic change in all geographic areas of Alaska

The Department of Education is the fiscal agent of the Implementation Grant and administers local subgrants for community partnerships. The School to Work Council (now Task Force), under AHRIC, provides guidance and direction for the state's school to work system.

Alaska Youth Ready for Work (RFW). This statewide nonprofit employer organization is a vehicle for educational reform by ensuring that all students graduate from Alaska's schools with the skills, attitudes, values, and confidence necessary to succeed in work. RFW established criteria for successful school to work reform efforts and inspired five model projects in 1990 which continue today. RFW also recruits businesses to provide work-based learning experiences for students and training opportunities for educators.

Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS). AKCIS is a collaborative effort between the Alaska Departments of Education and Labor to produce a computerized, interactive career planning system that provides statewide labor market information to high school and college students, as well as elementary and middle schools, counselors, and other interested persons.

Technology Infrastructure. The use of technology is a promising means of connecting students in remote rural areas with employers in high skill, high wage occupations. The state's technological infrastructure, including Star Schools, access to Internet, and other technologically based distance-learning initiatives, offer many opportunities to increase school to work experiences.

State Training and Employment Program (STEP). This program uses state dollars to offer training to help workers displaced by technological changes develop new skills and find new jobs.

Adult Basic Education. Approximately 50% of the 6,000 individuals served through Alaska's Adult Basic Education programs are under the age of 24. The state provides $1,700,000 for these programs and receives an additional $500,000 in federal funds.

Vocational Education. All 54 Alaska school districts receive vocational education funding based on the district's vocational education enrollment. The program also provides staff development about school to work transitions for instructors statewide.

Division of Education Program Support. This division of the state Department of Education ensures that all federal programs' state plans and/or annual applications for federal funding include school to work activities. The Division also ensures that school to work activities and services are addressed in each child's Individualized Educational Plan through its administration of federal Special Education funds.

Carl Perkins Funds. These federal vocational funds are spent on secondary vocational education and technical preparation to prepare youth for work. Tech prep programs lead to Associate Degrees or two-year certificates and prepare students for the transition from school to work. Carl Perkins funds also target special populations and encourage women and minorities to succeed in high skill, high wage occupations.

Alaska Transition Initiative. Alaska's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Postsecondary Education recently received a federal grant to help students with disabilities make successful transitions from school to living and working. Funds will provide capacity building activities for those who provide services to students with disabilities.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Promote and support state-level collaborations. *Promote and support state-level collaboration to develop an integrated school to work system by working with the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council (AHRIC), School to Work Implementation Task Force, and other state level agencies that provide school to work transition services.*

The Department will work with the Alaska State School Board and Board of Regents to ensure that school to work objectives are an integral part of education reform initiatives. The Department will also work with the Alaska Human Resource Investment Council to ensure school to work is a vital part of Alaska's work force development policy.

Increase awareness. *Increase awareness of the need for school to work opportunities and build support for school to work programs by involving students, student organizations, parents, educators, employers, and community-based organizations in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of school to work systems.*

The School to Work initiative is not an education only initiative. To be successful in building school to work systems, all stakeholders must be aware of the need for and understand what they can do to contribute to strong, successful local school to work systems. The Department of Education will undertake a statewide marketing program in conjunction with local school to work partnerships. The Department also plans to:

- make presentations at meetings and conferences of other stakeholders groups; and,
- place information on school to work policies, procedures, and resources on the Department's Web page.

Support statewide development and implementation. *Support the statewide development and implementation of an effective school to work transition system.*

The Department recognizes steps must be taken at the state level to ensure successful development and implementation of local school to work partnerships. These steps include:

- Develop and implement plans to support local school to work transition systems, including in rural communities.

- Integrate existing local programs providing school to work opportunities into the state school to work system.

- Use distance-learning programs to assist development of student employability and work skills, especially in rural communities.

- Support local partnerships to provide work experience opportunities for all youth in secondary education programs, including in rural communities.

- Develop and implement a system of career interest areas (career pathways, career clusters, or a high school major which take labor market needs into consideration) in all school districts.

- Design and implement a model to evaluate key components of the school to work transition system.

- Seek legislative recognition of school to work system implementation as a workforce development strategy.

Build capacity of local partnerships. *Provide support for and build the capacity of local partnerships to develop and maintain effective local school to work partnerships.*

The Department will take an active role to ensure that local school to work partnerships have the capacity to develop and continue effective school to work transition systems. The Department will:

- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities (e.g., teacher externships, job shadowing, interdisciplinary training) to educators to implement effective school to work programs.

- Provide technical assistance to employers (including small and medium sized businesses) to implement effective local school to work programs.

- Build a peer network of school to work practitioners to share information on best practices, system design, model programs, evaluation and assessment, etc.

- Promote and support collaboration among employers, schools, and community.

- Help develop articulation agreements between secondary and post secondary programs.

- Provide information to local partnerships on resources available for school to work support.

Provide equal access to career development information and support services. *Provide for and support equal access to career development information and support services.*

The School-Based Learning Committee (SBL) of the School to Work Council oversees the establishment of SBL activities to ensure local partnerships have the capacity so that all students engage in individual career planning; career development experiences; and equal access to school to work opportunities. The Department will work with local school to work partnerships and the SBL Committee to:

- Provide systems to support work-based, career exploration, and career awareness experiences for all students.
- Give all students individual career development planning and experiences.
- Give all students equal access to the broad range of occupational opportunities.
- Provide all students integrated school-based and work-based learning experiences.

Provide financial support for local planning, implementation, and evaluation *Provide for the funding of local school to work partnerships and seek long-term support for the state school to work system.*

The Department of Education will take several steps to secure funding to encourage, support and maintain effective state and local school to work system.

- Provide planning and implementation subgrants to support local partnerships in planning for local school to work systems.
- Provide demonstration subgrants to facilitate distribution of replication plans throughout the state.
- Seek long term funding to ensure continuation of the local school to work systems.

Technology

GOAL 4

Create technology-rich school environments to help Alaska students and community members become lifelong learners, productive members of the workforce, and contributing citizens.

RATIONALE

Learning technologies encompass a wide range of equipment and applications, from ordinary telephones which connect teachers and parents, to a complex network of satellites and cable and fiber optics which deliver interactive, multi-media learning opportunities. However, technology is neither an end in itself, nor an add-on. Technologies are tools and their effectiveness is derived from the teachers and students who use them. The potential for technological advances in support of education in both teaching and learning seem limitless. Each new generation of computers, each advance in multi-media application, and each gain in telecommunications delivery opens more opportunities. While schools are moving into the "information age," the gap between current opportunity and actual use in technology remains enormous in some schools.

CURRENT STATE ACTIVITIES

Technology Standards. The Alaska Goals 2000 Technology Plan builds upon the statewide technology plan developed under AK2K, which recommended the development of student performance standards in technology. In 1991, the Alaska Department of Education established a broad-based committee which developed draft student standards that clearly define the technological knowledge and skills Alaska students should possess. These draft standards helped guide the development of the Alaska Goals 2000 technology plan by suggesting: technology must be integrated across all curriculum areas; teacher training is essential to ensure students reach the standards; and students must have access to the networks and technologies necessary to acquire the skills.

Star Schools. Since 1990, Alaska has participated in the federally funded Pacific Northwest Star Schools Partnership. Alaska Star Schools serve over 2,000 Alaska students at 173 sites in 38 of the state's 53 districts. All sites receive equipment, training, and technical assistance through a unique network of tutors and technical support staff.

University Distance Learning. The University of Alaska operates several distance-learning initiatives that use one-way video/two-way audio satellite technology to deliver college courses to learners in remote locations. These initiatives include Livenet and the University of Alaska Learning Cooperative.

Distance Learning Consortium. Several school districts are collaborating with local telephone providers, broadcasting stations, and other resources to provide state-of-the-art videoconferencing, wide-area computer networks, and fiber optic networks. The systems are used primarily to link and deliver instruction to high schools in isolated areas. Other districts use technology to deliver cross-district inservice and other training.

Internet Access. Most Alaska schools and districts have the capability for limited Internet access. Connection to the Internet is hampered by the lack of local dial-in access and a telephone infrastructure that keeps access in most communities to a low baud rate.

SLED. The Alaska State Library has an online library service for public and school library patrons called State Library Electronic Doorway (SLED). It allows patrons access to major library collections holding card catalogs, and limited access to the Internet.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Provide access to hardware and services. *Explore strategies to equip classrooms with state-of-the-art computer technology and telecommunications, and develop state, district and community level networks.*

Access to equipment, computer networks, and telecommunications will ensure that Alaskans have the opportunity to meet state student standards in technology. The technology planning team calculated cost estimates to provide a workstation for every four students in a classroom; link all classrooms, the library, and administrative office in a school through a network capable of carrying voice, video, and data; link all schools to a district or community-wide network; and provide access to all communities (with more than 25 permanent residents) to available and affordable statewide digital communications networks. The Department of Education will explore ways to implement these bold plans.

Offer professional development: *Offer professional development to all educators in instructional uses of technology.*

To facilitate professional development, the State Board of Education will require competency in educational technology for teacher certification and recertification, and the University of Alaska will provide training opportunities statewide and require educational technology competency for all education degrees. The Department of Education will:

- Provide information to districts about professional development;
- Demonstrate effective uses of technology using existing electronic networks;
- Work with districts to assess and report on the impact of professional development;

- Encourage districts to make demonstrated technology competency a criteria in hiring teachers and administrators; and,

- Encourage local districts to provide for continued ongoing professional development in technology.

Support standards implementation: *Employ technology to support the implementation and assessment of Alaska 2000 content standards.*

Alaska recognizes that technology plays an important role in the implementation of all state standards. The Department will:

- Determine the range of technologies needed to implement standards and survey schools to determine the resources needed to achieve effective implementation;

- Develop strategies to use technology to support the statewide assessment system; and,

- Develop a plan to assess the impact of technology on student learning.

Support school to work. *Employ technology to support the implementation of programs under Alaska Human Resource Investment Council and the School to Work Implementation Task Force.*

The Department and selected districts will develop demonstration projects that utilize technology for school to work transition projects and school-business partnerships. The Department will also work with the School to Work Implementation Task Force and the Alaskan Human Resource Investment Council to:

- Develop strategies to use technology to provide school to work opportunities; and,

- Disseminate information electronically to schools about employment opportunities and job market trends, and

- Support the development and implementation of One Stop Career Centers for students to connect with the world of work after they leave school.

Establish funding sources. *Work with appropriate entities to establish stable funding sources for educational technology.*

The Department of Education will:

- Work to generate support among state policymakers to obtain support which will fund technology in the schools;

- Allow districts increased flexibility to effectively deploy, operate, upgrade, and maintain technology; and

- Seek grants to fund the technology plan.

Build collaborative infrastructure. *Develop and use a collaborative telecommunications infrastructure available in the state.*

To support collaboration, the Governor's Telecommunication Information Council (TIC), in conjunction with the Commissioner of Education, will manage fund appropriations and support community technology planning efforts. The TIC will compile information about existing telecommunications infrastructure to assess local needs. The Department will:

- Explore ways to provide grants, financial incentives, and expertise to community consortia to develop and implement telecommunications access and community networking; and

- Encourage each community to form a consortium of stakeholders to plan for community networking.

Develop administrative and support uses of technology. *Develop an electronic system for the management of student learning, record keeping and communications available to teachers, district- and state-administrators.*

The Department is working with WestEd Laboratory to design a system to connect all district offices to the Department. The student OASIS database will be operational in the 1997-98 school year. The Department will encourage districts to network individual classrooms and school sites with the district office to share funding and administrative data and student records

Family and Community Involvement

GOAL 5

Establish processes in each district and school to involve families and communities to ensure student success.

RATIONALE

Education is a shared responsibility among parents and family members, communities, businesses, government, and the schools. Evidence is clear that when schools work together with families and the community to support learning, children tend to succeed not only in school but throughout life. Testimony from Alaskan educators, parents, and community members before the State Board of Education documents the importance of family and community involvement for student success.

Strong partnerships among schools, families, and the community are emerging throughout the state. These partnerships play an important role in supporting families as well as increasing student success.

CURRENT STATE ACTIVITIES

Epstein's Model of Family Involvement. Under AK2K, the State Board of Education requested the Department of Education assess how the Department supports family involvement in schools. The Department identified opportunities to integrate family and community involvement throughout its responsibilities, including all federal programs. Using Epstein's Model of Family Involvement, as described in Figure 5, the Department will help strengthen family and community involvement at the school, district, and state level and among federal programs.

Quality Family and Parent Involvement. *Quality Family and Parent Involvement*, one part of the Quality Schools Initiative, is dedicated specifically to supporting parent and family involvement in learning activities at home and in school. This initiative is based on Partnership 2000, a nationally recognized program which uses the six category Epstein Model of Family Involvement. Other parts of the initiative incorporate family and community involvement in their activities and strategies. For example, the *Quality Schools Standards* section is developing standards that describe family friendly schools. Schools and communities will use the standards for self-assessment to increase family involvement.

Figure 5. Epstein Family Involvement Model

Type 1: Basic obligations of families. Schools help families meet their basic obligation to provide for children's health and safety. They can help parents develop good parenting skills and child-rearing approaches that prepare children for school and maintain healthy child development across grades. Good examples of this type of involvement are family-support and home-visiting programs.	***Type 2: Basic obligations of schools for communication.*** Schools are responsible for communicating with families about school programs and children's progress and for encouraging two-way communication between home and school. Communications include the notices, phone calls, visits, report cards and conferences that many schools provide, as well as more innovative ways to promote two-way home-school communication.
Type 3: Involvement at school. Parents and other volunteers assist educators and children in classrooms and other areas of the school in many different ways and also come to the school to support student performances and activities, including sports events.	***Type 4: Involvement in learning activities at home.*** Teachers request and guide parents to monitor and assist their own children at home. Schools enable families to understand how to help their own children at home by providing information on academic and other skills, with directions on how to monitor, discuss, and help with homework and practice and reinforce needed skills.
Type 5: Involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy. Parents and others in the community participate in parent associations, advisory councils and policy boards, school site management teams, or other communities and community organizations. Parents also become activists in independent advocacy groups in the community. Schools assist family members to be leaders and representatives by training them in decision-making skills and by including parents as true, not token, contributors to school decisions, and by providing information to community advocacy groups so they may knowledgeably address issues of school improvement.	***Type 6: Collaboration and exchange with community organizations.*** Schools collaborate with agencies, businesses, cultural organizations, and other groups to share responsibility for children's education and future success. Collaboration includes school programs that provide or coordinate child and family access to community and support services, such as before- and after-school care, health services, cultural events, and other programs. Schools also provide services, facilities, and expertise to the community.

Community Summit. The Community Summit is a three-stage effort to streamline the processes through which the state promotes healthy children and families. Two central concepts drive this effort: prevention and community development. The Summit will provide direction in reforming how health and education services are delivered to communities and offer technical assistance to ensure that such reforms are community-driven, integrated, and comprehensive. Teams of local citizens will be invited to attend the Summit and be supported after they return home to ensure that they successfully implement their preferred ways of promoting the well-being of children and families.

Children's Cabinet. As described earlier, the Cabinet holds as it mission to work "in partnership with families to ensure that all Alaska children have opportunities for happy, healthy and productive lives." The Cabinet will assume several responsibilities related to well being of children: oversee the development of benchmarks and goals related to the condition of children in Alaska; produce a Children's Report Card summarizing their findings; and hold the Community Summit as described above.

Federal Programs. Many of Alaska's current family and community involvement efforts are supported by federal programs, such as Even Start, Head Start, Title I, Title IV and Title VI programs. These programs provide training opportunities for parents and community members to learn about effective family and community involvement practices.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Implement an effective family involvement model: *Promote and encourage family and community involvement using Epstein's Model of Family Involvement.*

The Department will participate in Partnership 2000, a nationally recognized program based on the six category Epstein Model of Family Involvement. The Department will train pilot schools from 10 school districts during 1996-97, and additional schools and districts during 1997-2000.

Promote centers for support services: *Encourage schools to collaborate with and establish partnerships with social service agencies to create centers in which social, medical, and mental health services are accessible.*

The Department will:

- Disseminate information about collaboration models such as Partnership 2000 and Working Respectfully with Families;
- Provide training on collaboration models such as Partnership 2000;
- Identify and amend state policy, regulations, and statutes that impede work between agencies, particularly as they affect schools; and,
- Support and participate in the Community Summit to help develop and implement a community-driven approach to child and family well-being.

Design self-review standards: *Develop quality review standards (to include opportunity-to-learn and school to work standards) that schools and communities can use to self-assess their family and community involvement efforts.*

Standards for family and community involvement will be developed as part of the Quality Schools Initiative. The review standards will include appropriate criteria from Alaska's Opportunity-to-Learn standards which will be developed with the assistance of the Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). Appropriate school to work standards, once developed, will also be included in the quality review standards.

Until the quality review standards are developed, schools can use materials from Partnership 2000 Project to assess family and community involvement.

Strengthen local linkages: *Support local staff (e.g., home-school coordinators, school social service workers) who link the school, home, and community.*

Multiple uses of technology, including video- and audio-conferencing, distance-learning, and computer networking, will play an important role in connecting schools with families and the community. For example, the Department will use technology to disseminate success stories and information on best practices on family and community involvement (linked to Epstein's six categories).

The Department will also establish an Ed-Info Hotline so parents can access parent involvement information such as at-home learning activities and child-rearing practices.

Include parents and community member in making decisions: *Involve parents and community representatives in school decision-making through their participation in the development of state content, performance, school to work, and opportunity-to-learn standards.*

Strong parent and community involvement was a hallmark in the development and review of state content standards. The Department of Education intends to conduct a similar process of involving parents, community and business representatives, and content area specialists in the development of performance, opportunity-to-learn, and school to work standards.

Share information about best practices: *Train parents, community members, and school staff to understand and use best practices in family and community involvement, including making appropriate educational decisions.*

Training parents, community members, and school staff is a cornerstone of Partnership 2000. The Department will extend that training beyond the pilot schools by providing information about Partnership 2000 and best practices on the Department's Web page. The Department will also publish a list of conferences on family and community involvement and encourage districts to attend.

Facilitate use of culturally appropriate practices: *Collaborate with other organizations to help local school boards facilitate discussions between community members, social services, families, schools, and other entities to identify and implement culturally appropriate educational practices.*

The Alaska State Board of Education, Alaska Family/Teacher Association, and Alaska's Chapter of the National Education Association Alaska Native Education Association, Rural Systemic Initiative, the Alaska Federation of Natives and other Native non-profit committees meet regularly. One topic they will address is determining how they can help local school boards and their communities implement culturally appropriate educational practices. For example, the State Board of Education plans to develop resolutions that encourage every school district to acquire and implement appropriate bilingual/bicultural curriculum and materials. The State Board also has an action plan to strengthen linkages to groups such as the Alaska Federation of Natives that address the needs of Alaska Natives and other cultural minorities enrolled in Alaska schools.

Professional Development

GOAL 6

Develop a comprehensive staff development system that builds the capacity of all school staff, families, and communities to improve instruction and enhance student learning.

RATIONALE

Professional development must be an integral part of the education system if educators are to keep pace with developments in learning theory and effective teaching practice. As Alaska implements standards-based reform, educators must have opportunities to broaden and deepen their content knowledge to help children achieve high standards. Alaska's professional development efforts also need to prepare teachers for the educational challenges they face in rural schools.

CURRENT STATE ACTIVITIES

Quality Professional Standards. The Governor's Quality Schools Initiative has made professional development a priority. One section of the initiative, *Quality Professional Standards*, addresses ways to ensure that teachers and administrators have and maintain the skills and abilities to do their jobs well. This effort is identifying how the State Board of Education and Department of Education can support:

- University teacher education programs,
- Continuing Education staff development,
- Initial licensure, re-licensure, and master certification,
- Local hire and more Native educators, and
- Rewarding excellent educators and removing inadequate educators.

Training Content Leaders. The Department of Education supports and works with teacher leader organizations (e.g., Alaska Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Alaska Science Teachers Association) and regional consortia (e.g., Alaska Mathematics Consortium, Science Consortium) to train teachers to be state leaders in their content areas.

Curriculum Frameworks. The three grants received from the US Department of Education to develop curriculum frameworks have helped the Alaska Department of Education identify their professional development responsibilities to ensure that Alaska implements a standards based education system. The Department is utilizing distance-learning to provide professional development on state content standards as part of the curriculum frameworks grants.

Teacher Education Standards. Teacher education standards were developed and adopted by the State Board of Education in July, 1995. These standards describe the skills and knowledge base teachers need to help students achieve high standards.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

This plan weaves staff development strategies throughout its discussion of other goals. In addition, the professional development goal will pursue the following strategies.

Support training cadres: *Collaborate with other educational agencies, employers and community agencies to identify and/or support training cadres and school support teams, develop and organize talent banks, and support regional consortia.*

The Department of Education will expand current efforts to train teachers to be state leaders in their content areas. Efforts to establish training cadres or talent banks from this pool of teachers and making their expertise available to districts across the State help to strengthen the content knowledge of all Alaska teachers.

Successful implementation of the Quality Schools Initiative must also include the participation of employers and community organizations, groups that often are pleased to participate but are unsure how to effectively offer their assistance. Training cadres will be developed with intent toward providing assistance for employers and members of the community to participate in productive and meaningful way.

As part of the state accreditation process and the IASA Title I requirement for distinguished educators to provide mentorship to low performing schools, the Department will work with the Alaska Regional Assistance Center to reinstate the once popular talent bank using strategies which capitalize on networks already established (such as the Alaska Math Consortium) rather than requiring extensive absence of educators from their schools.

Collaborate on pre-service and inservice opportunities: *Develop collaborative relationships and implementation plans among post-secondary institutions, Alaska Department of Education, local school districts, employees, business, teacher and community organizations so that pre-service and inservice education reflect state student, teaching, and school standards.*

The Department of Education also plans to build upon work completed by the state Frameworks Committees (which determined the match between current teacher education courses and state standards) by working with post-secondary institutions and local school districts to ensure teacher education courses reflect state standards. These efforts will help teachers meet teacher education standards and acquire strong content knowledge.

Integrate professional development funds: *Help local districts integrate professional development funds from programs identified in the state's Consolidated Plan under IASA (e.g., Title I, Eisenhower) to prepare teachers and other educators to enable students to reach state standards.*

The State Consolidated Plan covers Title I (Basic, Even Start, Migrant Education, and Neglected and Delinquent), Title II, Title IV, Title VI, and Title VII of the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The Department of Education staff will help districts identify professional development needs and establish sustained, ongoing professional development programs using funds from programs in a district's Consolidated Plans. Similar assistance will also be provided to identify professional development needs and appropriate solutions for programs that are not included in the state's Consolidated Plan, *e.g.*, internships with business.

Disseminate information about effective practices: *Utilize technology to disseminate information about effective practices and state standards (e.g., electronic bulletin boards) and to provide professional development (e.g., distance-learning) to all Alaska educators.*

The Department will continue to develop distance-learning courses on key professional development topics in collaboration with the University system and make them accessible to all communities. The Department will also place information on professional development grant opportunities, and examples of effective practices on the Department's Web page so they can be easily accessed by all Alaskan citizens, especially educators.

Through a partnership with the Alaska Regional Assistance Center and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the Department will begin support for a "Best Practices" program in Alaska to support federal programs. In addition, the State Board action plan to improve Native Student Learning includes establishment of best practices in rural and multicultural education. These will be the basis of resources made available for teacher professional development.

Assure compliance: *Review district programs for compliance with federal and state staff development requirements.*

In 1996-97, the Department will establish Service Review Teams composed of staff from across federal and state programs to replace individual program monitors. The Service Review Teams will provide guidance to districts that do not meet federal and state professional development requirements by identifying effective, ongoing professional development programs.

Provide staff development. *Provide staff development to help educators enhance the learning of students with diverse backgrounds and languages.*

In addition to the annual Bilingual, Multicultural, and Equity Education Conference and the technical assistance they already provide districts, the Department will:

- Work collaboratively across programs to fund professional development activities for teachers serving students with diverse backgrounds and languages;

- Disseminate publications, such as curriculum guides, to help districts and teachers serve students with diverse backgrounds and languages more effectively; and,

- Disseminate information about effective teaching practices for students with diverse backgrounds, on the Department's Web page.